

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

homemakers' chat

FOR USE IN NON-COMMERCIAL BROADCASTS ONLY

U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Monday, February 28, 1944.

Subject: "PRICE CEILINGS? RATIONING AND NUTRITION."
officials and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Information from OPA

LIBRARY
CURRENT SERVICE RECORD

FEB 24 1944

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

--ooOoo--

Today is the first day of the new rationing system, with all the new blue stamps worth 10 points each, and red and blue "tokens" to use in making change. You've heard many advance explanations about the new system, and today you are actually trying it out for the first time.

This is a good time to assure you---and all other homemakers---that you can serve just as nutritious meals when you are using 10-point stamps as you could under the old stamp values. You will have about as many points as before---certainly enough to provide a good diet if you plan carefully, and you can stay within your food budget if you remember to check on price ceilings for everything you buy.

However, it's a sort of "three-ring-circus", this job of providing the right food in wartime, and you have to keep your eye on all three parts of the problem all the time---price ceilings, ration points, and food values.

First, take ceiling prices. OPA established top prices in each community for most ordinary foods. Dealers may offer foods at lower prices than the ceiling price, but may not go above it. If you are looking for extra low prices, shop early in the week, and early in the day. Monday is a good shopping day because week-end leftovers are sometimes marked down, and because cuts in ration points are generally made on Mondays. Look for "Victory Selections" and "no point-low point" foods if you want to stretch your food dollars. In other words, buy what's temporarily abundant, which is usually the best buy from the cost standpoint.

After you've checked the price per pound or can or package of the kind of food you wish to buy, with the ceiling price, your next concern is how many points that food will cost. You haven't quite enough points? That brings us to the nutritive value of the food you're interested in. What can you get instead, that will have the same food value, cost only as many points as you have, and as much money as you wish to spend?

Unless you go to market with a flexible menu in mind, you may find yourself confused because the dealer doesn't have what you planned, at any price. Or you may not have enough points to buy your preferred food that day. Or your weekly food allowance may not quite stretch to include the food you'd like, even if it's under the ceiling price, and you have the stamps. So, alongside each item on your menu that may be in doubt, better note some alternate food that could take its place, and that will go well with your meal as a whole. For example, if you're having a custard dessert, and can't get meat, you won't want eggs either, since the custard supplies them. Fish or beans would be a better alternate.

Actually, having to use "alternates now and then means a more varied diet for your family. Every homemaker gets into shopping and cooking ruts. Haven't you eaten meals out that reminded you of foods you've forgotten to have? You've said to yourself, "How good these stuffed spareribs are! Why don't we have them?" Or it may be Boston baked beans---or scalloped cabbage---or peanut butter loaf---or goldenrod eggs---whatever the dish happened to be. You go home inspired to treat the family to a change.

Let's run quickly through the food groups and their "alternates." The problem of buying an "alternate" comes up most often with meats, milk and milk products, some fruits, green and yellow vegetables, and some fats, particularly butter. But at this season of the year you can count on getting eggs, citrus fruits, and many fresh green and yellow vegetables. Most of the other food groups ---dried beans, peas, and peanuts---flour and cereals---

don't present any difficulties when you go shopping. White potatoes are plentiful, cheap, and unrationed just now.

We depend on the citrus fruits and tomatoes for vitamin C, and fortunately oranges and grapefruit are plentiful now. You can get canned grapefruit juice point free. Canned tomato juice is fairly low in points, too, and in a short time you'll be getting fresh tomatoes, both in the stores and then out of your garden. You can also count on salads and leafy green vegetables for vitamin C. Raw cabbage is another good source-and cabbage is plentiful. The strawberry season is almost here and strawberries are good sources of this vitamin. So you have a good many choices in the spring for getting vitamin C.

Milk every day is a "must" in any good diet. The milk may be fluid, whole or skim, evaporated, dried, buttermilk, or cheese or ice cream. If you can't get as much as you need, give the family an extra helping of whole grain or enriched cereal and an extra green leafy vegetable, and eggs or soybeans or meat, fish or poultry.

You need a green or yellow vegetable every day, in addition to any other vegetables you like---the more the better. Green cabbage, kale, spinach, beet tops, turnip greens, green peppers, lettuce, and other salad vegetables are in the market now. They are all point-free. Carrots and summer squash are also easy to get, and you may use canned or frozen green and yellow vegetables, too.

Everyone needs 4 to 6 eggs a week, and they aren't rationed. Use also other protein-rich foods---meats, fish or poultry, once a day if your ration books or food budget permit, but you can use extra eggs, or cheese, as alternates when necessary. When you do, serve an extra vegetable, or whole-grain or enriched cereal. Dry beans or peas or soybeans also alternate for meats and fish.

Remember that the cost of any food has little or nothing to do with its food value. You can give your family a poor diet even when you buy expensive foods, and a good diet when you choose the right foods among the least expensive. It's all in knowing how to make good selections in food values, ration book in hand, with an eye on ceiling prices, and also on your food budget.

